



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
JOINT REGION MARIANAS
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THE OFFICE OF
SENATOR *James*
JAMES C. MOYLAN

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Ser J00/0346
July 3, 2019

The Honorable Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero
Maga'Håga – Governor of Guam
Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Madam Governor,

Thank you for your letter of June 26, 2019, requesting pause of the construction of the Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range until December 2019 when the genetic study of the Serianthes nelsonii tree is expected to be final. I share your concern for the mature Serianthes nelsonii tree. It is a testament to military stewardship that the population of this species which used to be distributed on Guam has only been able to survive on a military installation. Let me assure you that our mutual goal for protecting this tree, its saplings and the USFWS approved forest buffer has already been met by permanently distancing the Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range sufficiently away. Therefore, I respectfully submit that there is no concern about the timing of the future construction of the Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range.

I thank you for your sincere interest in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) funded study that intends to determine the degree of natural genetic variance of the Serianthes nelsonii species which is found on Guam and Rota. I apologize that during our recent tour together to visit the tree at Andersen Air Force Base's Northwest Field, we did not sufficiently explain the permanent protective measures and additional research regarding the tree.

To clarify, Serianthes nelsonii is a single species endemic to Guam and Rota. Within any species, genetic variation is normal and actually contributes to the long-term health of populations. In its 2016 5-Year Recovery Plan Review, the USFWS recommended using S. nelsonii from Rota to increase Guam's population and encourage genetic mixing. While it is important to better understand the genetic variances between Guam and Rota trees, this information will not change the endangered status of the species. Regardless of the research findings, the Serianthes nelsonii adult tree and outplanted seedlings remain fully protected with protective measures in place.

We are successfully raising the Guam tree's seeds for our military conservation areas outplanting plan. Under the 2015 Biological Opinion, the Navy has committed to outplanting at least 30 Serianthes nelsonii saplings and maintaining these saplings until maturity. This is in addition to over 200 seedlings propagated for outplanting in protected areas on Andersen Air Force Base, 41 of which are currently outplanted and 160 are being raised in a nursery. The saplings currently growing under the Serianthes nelsonii are being protected from pests and ungulates until maturity. Ungulate control for the protection of the Serianthes nelsonii includes fencing and then removing ungulates from the entire surrounding plateau area including the

5860
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nearby planned ranges. The Navy understands that restoration of an endangered species and enhancement of a forest are long-term programs, requiring a sustained effort for 30 or more years. I therefore seek your essential support for continuing collaboration with federal and Guam agencies and the Chamoru community to help ensure the success of this and other conservation endeavors.

I look forward to our continued partnership and collaboration for recovering the Serianthes nelsonii on Guam. Please do not hesitate to call me anytime at (671) 349-3200.

Sincerely,



S. S. CHATFIELD
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander